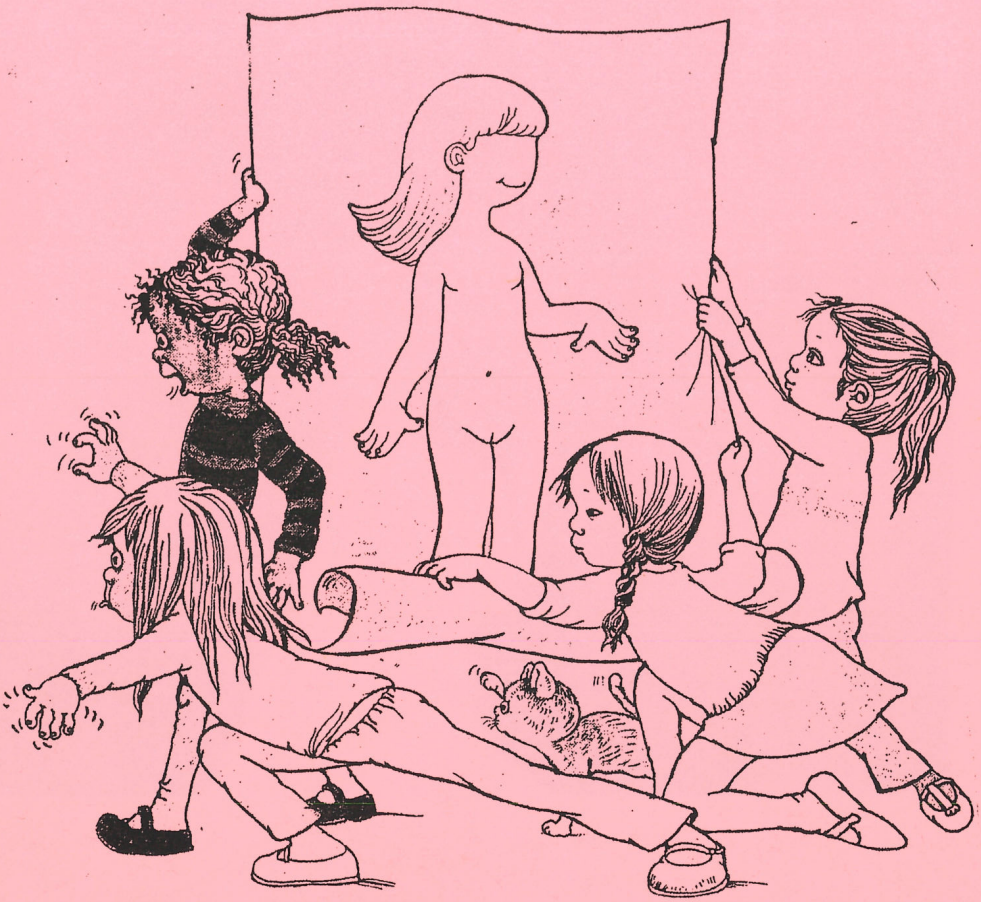
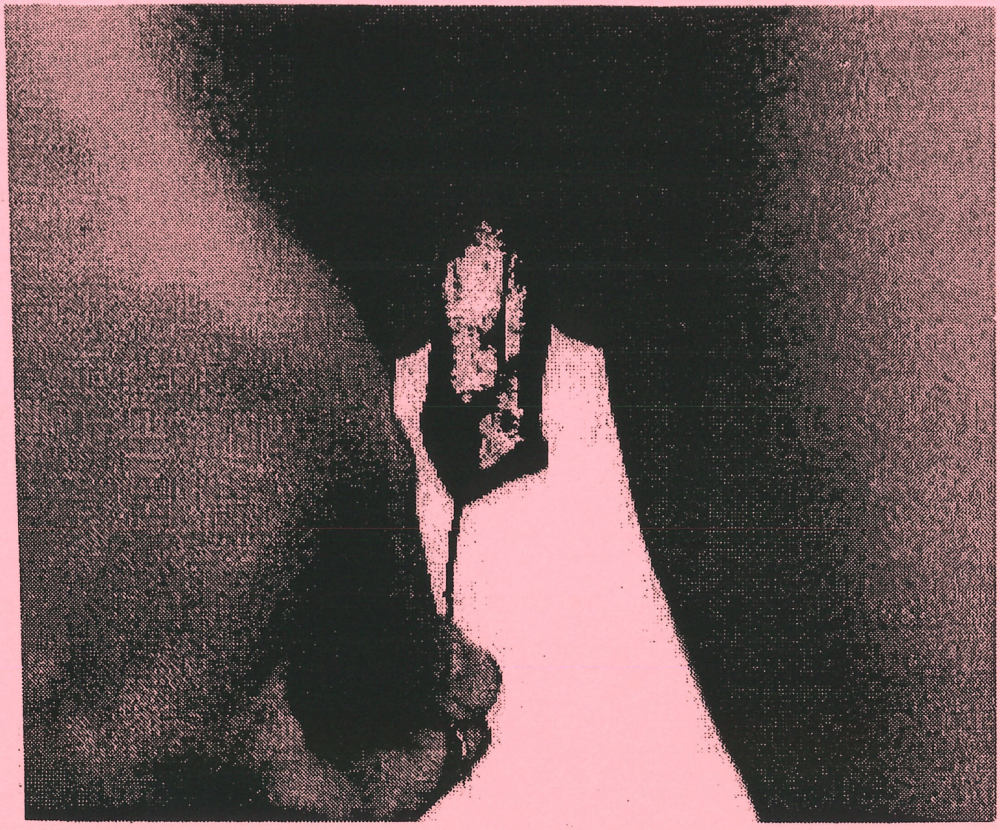


Let's forget everything we learned about being a girl.

Bloodsisters of the World ... Unite! and take over.



Material for this zine was liberally stolen (you could also say plagiarised and be pretty much on the mark) from the following sources:

Hot Pants Zine – DIY Gynecology & Herbal Remedies
by Bloodsisters Collective

Cunt – A Declaration Of Indepence by Inga Musico

pictures taken from many sources but most notably from:

DIY Feminism edited by Kathy Bail

The Zine Yearbook volumes 5-7

lots of research was done on the innanet, it all started from the **bloodsisters.org** website and went from there.

If anything in this zine gets ya thinking & you have questions, then feel free to contact me: ~~lack@belladonnadiy.org~~ or better yet, talk to your fellow bloodsisters, put on Morrissey real loud & change the words....bloooood siss-tuhs of the wooo-oh-oold, unite & tahke over.

contact · propertealistheftoriseup·net

Contents:

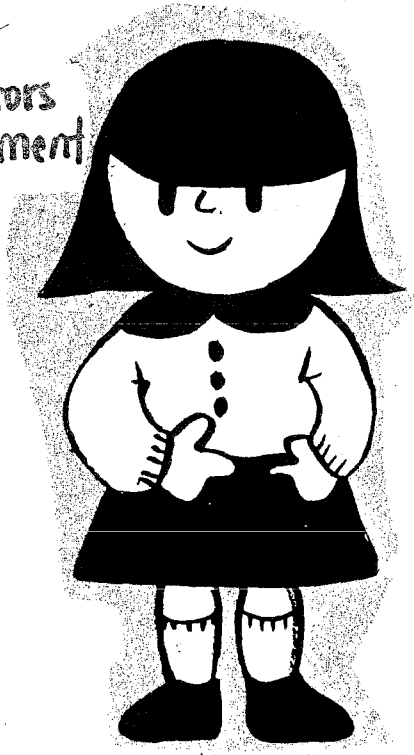
Technical Descriptions →
- clitoris & genital glands
- vagina
- uterus
- ovaries

How Come Pads/Tampons Are So Fahkd UP!?? →
- big business hurts menstruators
- big business hurts the environment

Alternatives →
- sea sponges
- baby socks
- the keeper
- cloth pads
- blood towel

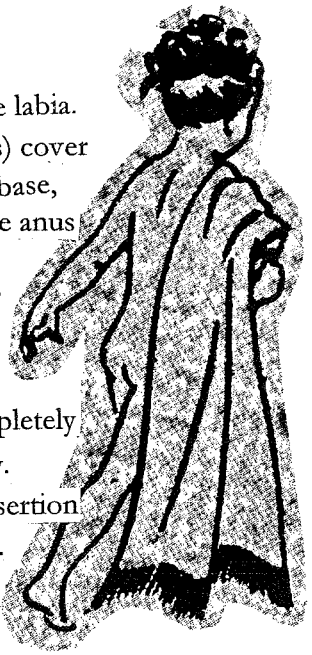
Your Cunt & The Moon

Appendix →
- cloth pad template



When I grow up I'm going to have my own identity...

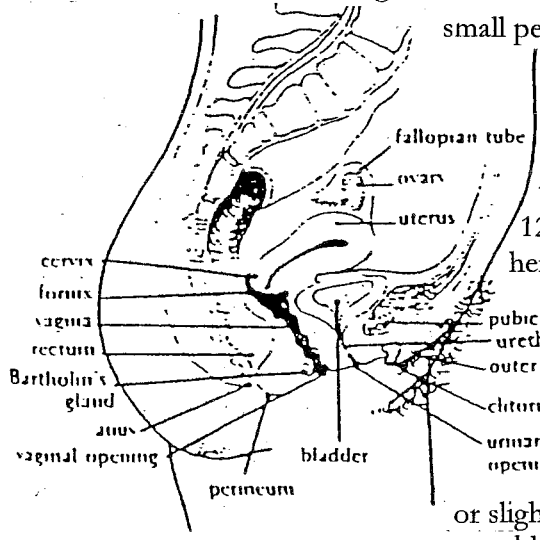
Technical Description of Your "Girly Bits"



The external female genital organs are the clitoris & the labia. Together they form the vulva. The labia majora (outer lips) cover the other parts of the vulva. They become thinner at their base, where they fuse with the perineum, the muscle between the anus and the vagina. Inside the labia majora are the labia minora. They are joined at the top to form a protective sheath over the clitoris. They also protect the opening to the urethra. The area between the labia minora is largely occupied by a space called the vestibule. At birth this space is almost completely covered by the hymen, which varies in size, shape & rigidity. The hymen can be torn during sporting activities, by the insertion of a tampon or during masturbation or vaginal penetration. Some women have pieces of skin around the vestibule – these are the remnants of the hymen.

The Clitoris & Genital Glands

The clitoris is an organ designed essentially for sexual stimulation & pleasure. The clitoris & labia contain erectable tissue which swell up during sexual excitement. Two pairs of glands are attached to the vulva: the Skene's gland lie just under the clitoris, & secrete an alkaline liquid which reduces the vagina's natural acidity. The second & larger set of glands, the Bartholin's glands, are located at the opening of the vestibule, & secrete fluid during stimulation. They are normally about the size of a small pea & are not very prominent.



FEMALE PELVIC ORGANS inside view

The Vagina

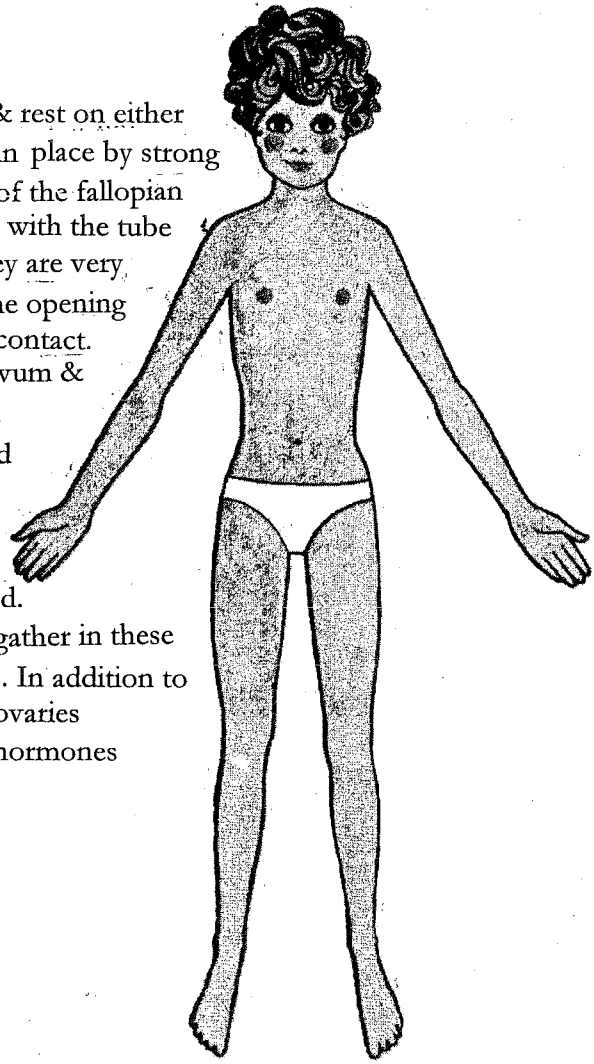
The vagina is the channel which connects the vulva and the internal organs. It is 7-12cm long. During a women's fertile time, her vaginal sections are acidic but before puberty & after menopause the vagina is moderately alkaline. Vaginal secretions come from the Bartholin's glands & the cervical canal (which is also the source of cervical mucous). Their normal discharge is odourless & watery or slightly white. They cleanse the vaginal canal, in addition to coating the interior of the vagina.

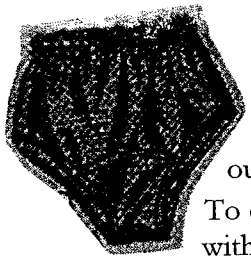
The Uterus

The uterus is about the size & shape of a pear & is made up of two main parts: the body & the cervix. From puberty to menopause the endometrium (or the uterine lining) forms every month, to provide nutritive support for a fertilized egg. If the egg is not fertilized, the endometrium is expelled – this is known as menstruation. The cervix is shaped like a cylinder: it is appox. 2 ½ cm long, w/a fine canal running through it, opening into the uterus up top, & the vagina at the bottom. All changes in the functions of the uterus (menstruation, pregnancy, menopause) are regulated by hormones controlled by the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland, the ovaries, & other substances such as prostaglandins secreted by the uterine tissue. The uterus is connected to the fallopian tubes which harbour the ovum (egg) released every month by one of the two ovaries.

The Ovaries

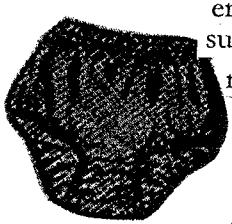
The ovaries are located in the pelvis & rest on either side of the uterus. Each ovary is held in place by strong elastic ligaments. The serrated orifice of the fallopian tube is located just above each ovary, with the tube leading to the uterus. Even though they are very close to each other, the ovaries & the opening of the fallopian tube are not in direct contact. The ovaries develop & release the ovum & play an essential role in our hormonal system. They are pinkish-grey, almond shaped & are about 3cm long. A layer of cells called the orogenic epithelium covers the ovaries: it is from these cells that the egg is formed. Thousands of immature ova (eggs) gather in these pouches on the surface of the ovaries. In addition to their role of developing the ova, the ovaries produce the hormones produce the hormones oestrogen & progesterone.



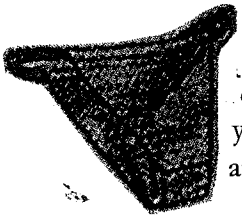


A Good Idea For Replacing Tampons

Because of the feminine hygiene's pervasive presence and coercive nature, it is difficult to imagine life without popping our tampons or throwing out our bloody plastic pads each month. To consider using cloth pads disgusts most women who grew up with tampon dispensers and commercials fuelling our embarrassment of our bodies. Multi-national giants have successfully saturated the "American," "Canadian," and "European" markets that it has become a given that a girl graduates into womanhood with the decision of what company she chooses as her "feminine protection."

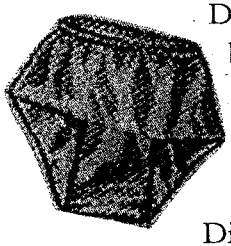


Tampons suck.



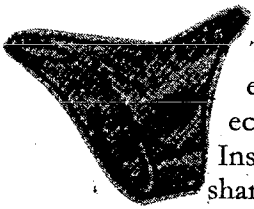
They suck. They suck. They suck.

Physically. Environmentally. Economically. Not only are they designed to absorb your monthly flow, they also absorb all your other good juices that keep your little lady ecosystem healthy and in check!



Disposable pads suck, just as hard, except they don't suck as dry, but instead, line our panties with plastic and chemicals, suffocating our cunt while disturbing our flora. They also pile high to they sky in landfill sites and don't biodegrade.

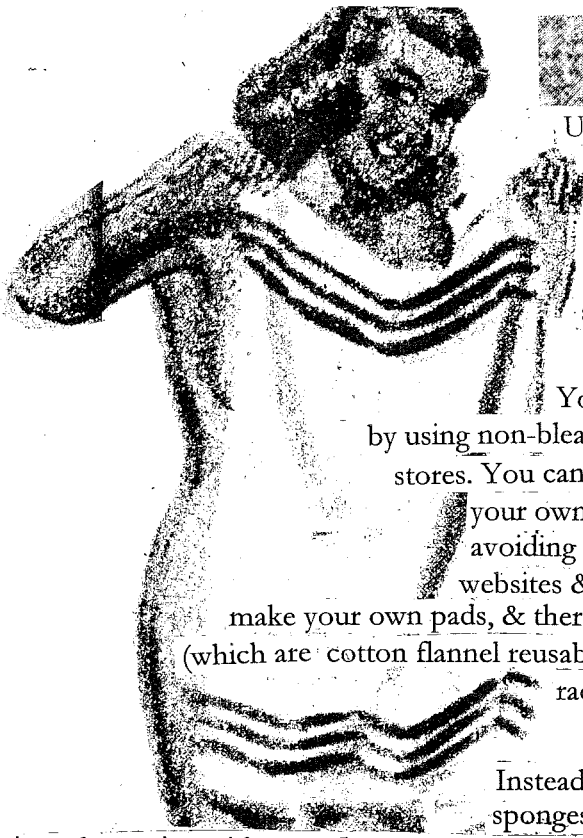
Disposable protection only protects the mainstream feminine hygiene industry's profits, not our bodies!



These corporations are not primarily concerned with the serious environmental ramifications, the health implications or the economic impact on women's lives.

Instead, major companies make money off the promotion of shame, secrecy and the "inconvenience" of our bodies. Each time we throw away another tampon we uphold an economic system that heralds waste, trashes women's bodies, abuses workers in factories and destroys the environment.

They fill our landfill sites. They deplete our pockets. They trash our natural resources. They use toxic chemicals. They think we should smell like baby powder. They feed corporate power. They colonize



Some Tampon Alternatives

Using brand name tampons & pads can be harmful to you. Plus they cost a fortune, being "luxury" items & all. Whenever possible, avoid scented products as these release a whole slew of chemical into your girl parts.

You can solve some of these problems by using non-bleached tampons, available at health food stores. You can also but 100% cotton pads (or make your own!) they are washable & reusable, thus avoiding unnecessary waste. There are many websites & zines with directions on how to make your own pads, & there are also products such as Glad Rags (which are cotton flannel reusable pads) available at food co-ops and radical health food stores.

Instead of tampons you can use natural sea sponges. Simply dampen the sponge, insert it into the vagina with your fingers, and remove once it's saturated. Don't worry about pushing it up to far – even though it doesn't have a cord there's no risk of losing it "up there".

Sponges can be left inside the vagina for several hours, depending on your flow & the size of the sponge. Once the sponge is saturated rinse it in warm or cold running water, squeeze out the excess water, & bung it back in there!

(Ed.) One important thing to note is once that sea sponge is full, its *full*!! When sponge can't hold any more blood it will start to leak. I've found that it helps to try and get to know which are your heavier days and on those days make sure to remove & rinse out your sponge more regularly. Once you've been using sponges for a few months you tend to get the hang of it. When I buy a sponge I tend to cut it in ½ or trim it to a size that's more manageable.

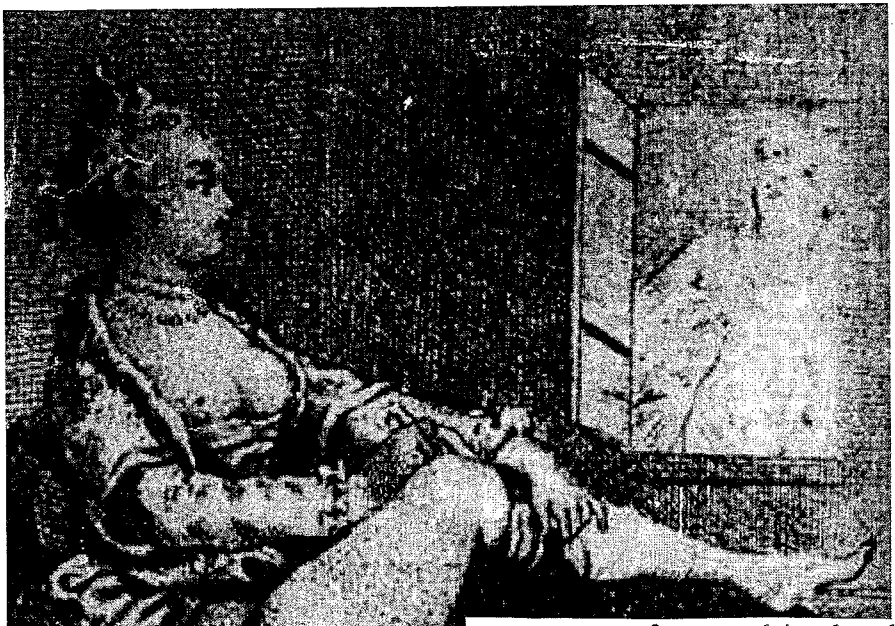
This is a cheaper, eco-friendly alternative to tampons. Avoid synthetic sponges. Natural sponges are often sold as make-up removal sponges, & can be found in

the cosmetic section of the pharmacy or at health food stores. Of course they aren't advertised as menstrual sponges cuz that would threaten the "sanitary hygiene" industry. A sponge can last up to six months if you take care of it. Discard the sponge once it begins to fall apart. Soak your sponge overnight in a cup of water with one teaspoon of white vinegar before and/or after each period. This kills the bacteria that can cause yeast & other vaginitis. If you have a bad vaginal infection during menstruation, its best not to reuse that sponge again. Store your sponge in a cloth bag or box between periods.

The following is an anecdote about sponges and public restrooms:

A friend of a friend was in a busy nightclub waiting in line to use the toilet. There were four stalls & at least as many women at the sinks, primping & washing their hands. Suddenly, all normal bathroom conversation came to a crashing holt as a voice from behind one of the stall doors pealed out, "I'm coming out with my sea sponge, so if you're gonna gross out, shut your eyes." A woman then emerged from her stall, sea sponge in hand. Will all eyes upon her, she washed it carefully at the sink, went back into her stall and finished up her business. One woman actually did close her eyes, but everyone else stood transfixed. When the woman came out again, she fielded quite a number of questions about where to get sea sponges & how to use them. The whole room of women came together for a few moments, laughing & talking about our blood.

Some women may be ok to have a more hands on approach to their periods and enjoy their blood, but other women may not be comfortable to challenge the taboo at their workplace, school or public space. This is the main limitation to sea sponges. Often its just not practical or even appropriate to rinse the blood out of your sponge in public. Some women use their sponges only at home and use



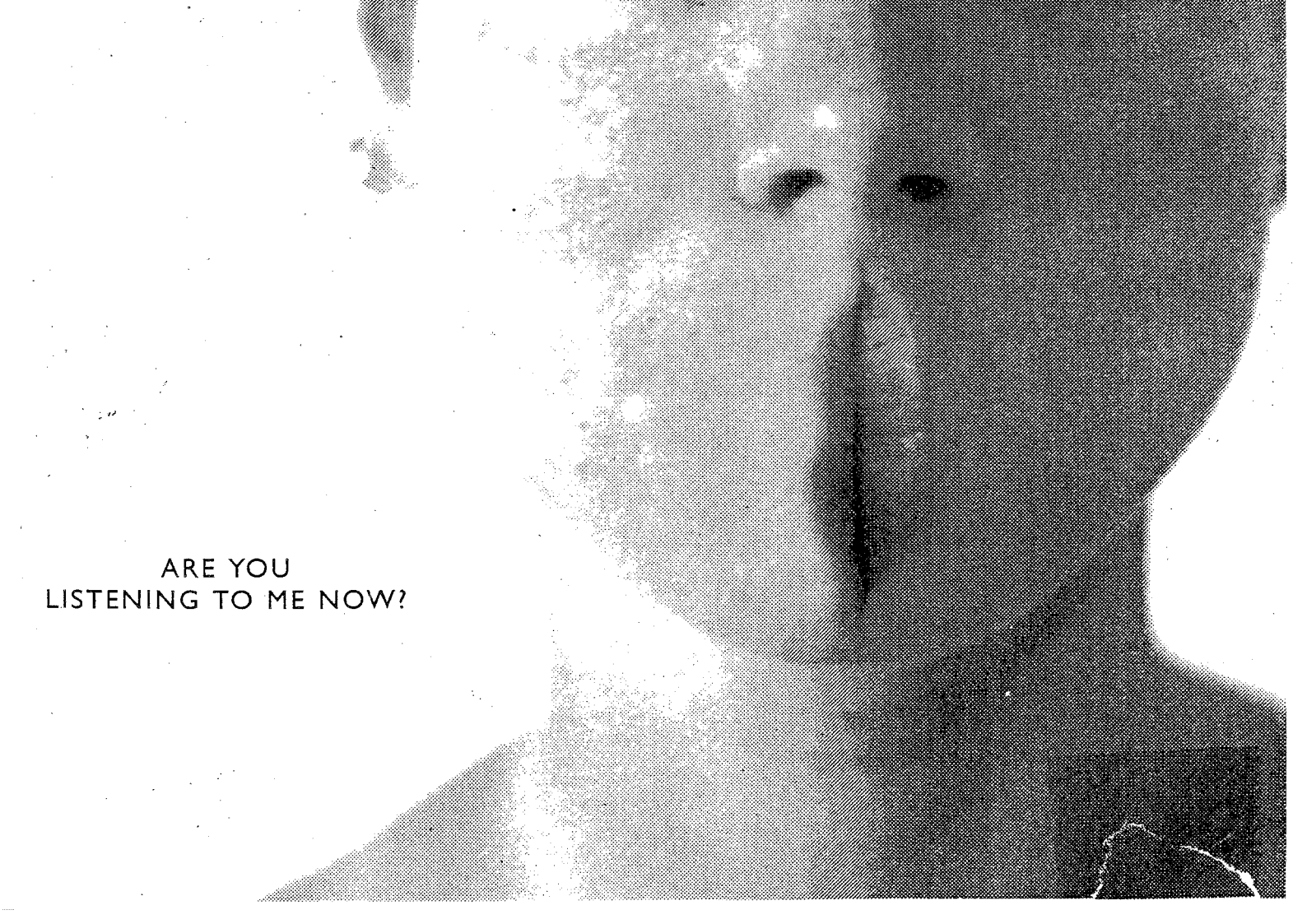
tampon manufactures claim that the dioxin levels in tampons range from undetectable to a mere 1 part in 3 trillion, much lower levels than what one receives through daily, environmental exposure. Technically, this is true, but in practice, even industry spokesmen admit that dioxins can enter tampons through ingredients such as cotton and rayon, which are exposed to pollutants throughout their life cycles. And most importantly, the tests that have been done were provided by the tampon manufacturers, and no tests that have been done can prove that any tampons are completely dioxin free. When dealing with the most absorbent part of your body, why take the risk?

♀ Health effects of dioxin include endometriosis, headaches, cancer, hormone disruption, birth defects, low birth weight, miscarriages, and infertility

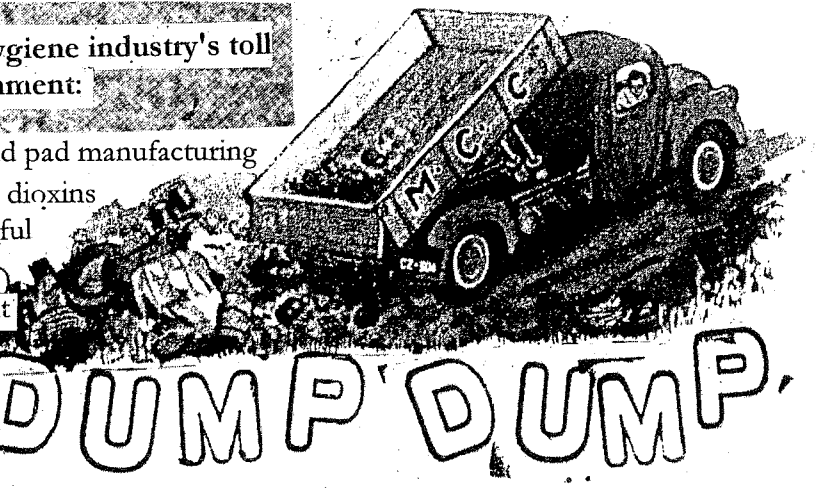
1We say 'menstruator' instead of woman because this is an issue of menstruation, not of gender. Not all women menstruate.

For more about who menstruates, look up 'Who Menstruates?' underneath "Health" at: Below the Belt.

www.deadletters.biz/belowthebelt


ARE YOU
LISTENING TO ME NOW?

The feminine hygiene industry's toll on the environment:



♀ The tampon and pad manufacturing process releases dioxins and other harmful chemicals into the environment which pollute waterways and seep into the food chain.

♀ Over 12 billion pads and 7 million tampons are used once and disposed of annually, clogging our overburdened landfill sites. (National Women's Health Network)

♀ An average menstruator1 throws away 250 to 300 pounds of tampons, pads, and applicators in hir lifetime. The great majority of these end up in landfills or sewage treatment plants.

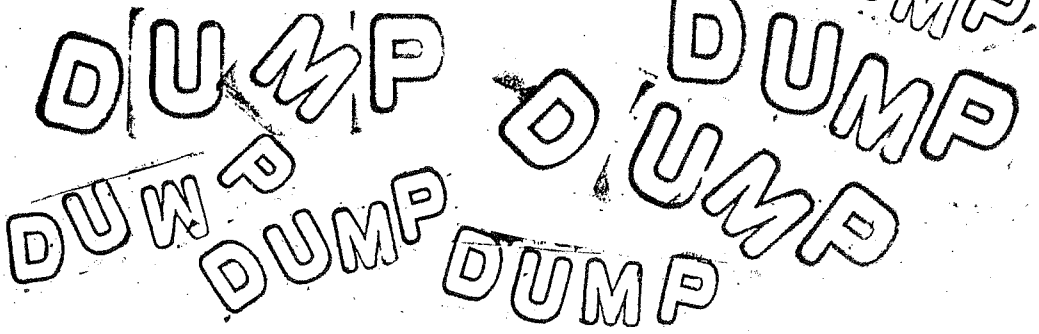
♀ Over 170,000 tampon applicators were collected along U.S. coastal areas between 1998 and 1999. (from the Center for Marine Conservation, info featured in E Magazine, March/April Issue 2001)

♀ Tampons are made from rayon, produced from wood pulp and cotton, a heavy pesticide crop.

♀ 25% of all insecticides are used on cotton.

♀ In California, it has become illegal to feed the leaves, stems, and short fibres of cotton known as gin trash to livestock, because of the concentrated levels of pesticide residue. instead, this gin trash is used to make furniture, mattresses, tampons, swabs, and cotton balls.

♀ Five of the top nine pesticides used on cotton in the U.S. (cyanide, dicofol, naled, propargite, and trifluralin) are known cancer-causing chemicals. All nine are classified by the U.S. EPA as Category I and II-- the most dangerous.



cultures. They monopolize shelf space. Hell, they own most of the world!
They make terrible commercials. They uphold racist ideologies. They pathologize our mood swings.
They penetrate our skool systems.
They instruct us not to know our bodies.
They choke our wildlife.
They pretend to be sterile.
They lie on their packages.
They can cause cancer.
They only really care about their profits.

YOUR LAB PARTNER IS TOTALLY HOT
P.S., YOUR PERIOD IS NO BIG DEAL. BUT IF FOUND OUT, YOU'D CHANGE SCHOOLS. IT'S A LOT SIMPLER JUST TO USE ULTRA THIN MAXIS, AND RELAX. HE'LL NEVER, EVER KNOW
Lightdays
Never Understandings

The feminine hygiene industry's toll on menstruators'[1] health:

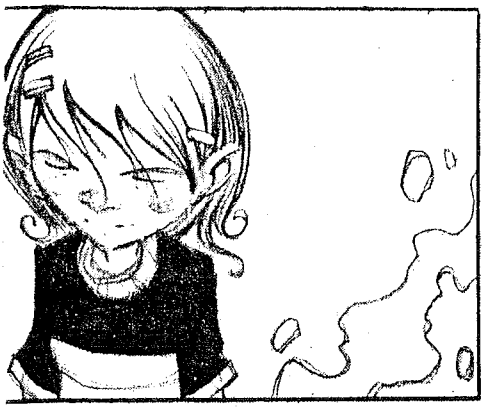
- ♀ A menstruator is likely to use 16,800 sanitary pads or tampons in a lifetime.
- ♀ Tampons soak up more than just blood. They also absorb vaginal mucous, which is necessary to maintain a healthy pH balance in the vagina; this phenomenon has been linked to yeast infections.
- ♀ Artificial fibres (like rayon) used in tampons are abrasive, so when a tampon lengthens it pushes against the cervical area, causing tiny cuts and imbedding pieces into the tissue. This has been traced as the probable cause of Toxic Shock Syndrome and has been shown to damage the vaginal walls by causing ulceration and peeling of the mucous membrane.
- ♀ [redacted] 25% of all pesticides are used on cotton, which are used to make tampons. No long-term independent testing has been done on the health effects of using non-organic cotton tampons.
- ♀ Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS): TSS is a rare but fatal bacterial illness that occurs mostly in young menstruators. TSS has been linked to tampon use and the high absorbency level in tampons. The number of reported cases has dropped significantly in recent years, from 55 deaths and 1,066 cases during 1979 and 1980 to 5 reported cases in 1997 and 3 in 1998, due to increased regulation by the FDA of tampon absorbency and changes in tampon ingredients.
- ♀ Dioxin: Up until a few years ago, tampon companies used chlorine gas to bleach tampons which produced small amounts of dioxin. Now, if you call up Johnson and Johnson, makers of O.B. tampons, their spokesman, John McKeegan, will tell you that the company uses elemental chlorine-free bleaching, which does not produce dioxin. Tests provided to the FDA by the big

In the wardrobe of Her Royal Daintiness.

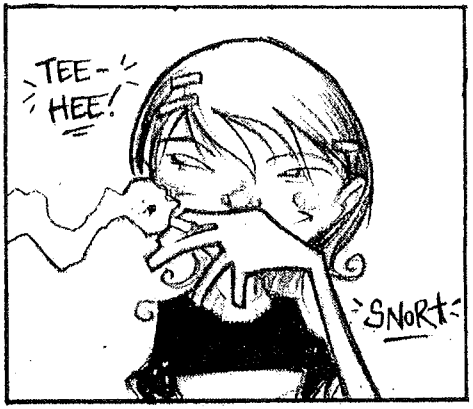
INEXPENSIVE, COMFORTABLE, HYGIENIC and SAFE — KOTEX

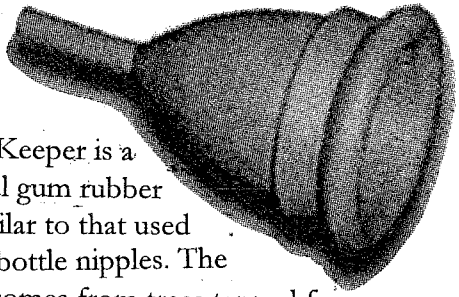
tampons or pads when at work or school or out partying. The idea here is to highlight the fact that there are alternatives. Some women may like one more than the other, or like to use a combination of things to soak up their blood.

For another inexpensive solution, here's a Frugal Mom Tip!

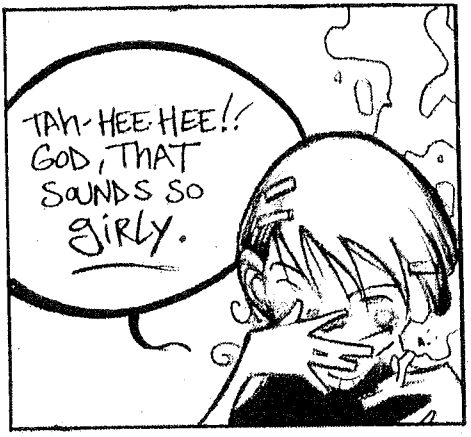


Buy 6 pair *(or more)* of 100% cotton white (or whatever colour you fancy!!) baby socks. Wash *(and dry)* three times with a natural, mild soap - rinsing well. At your next period, simply roll up one baby sock into a tight roll, and insert as you would a tampon. If you need more absorbency, use two baby socks rolled up. Replace it with the next baby sock as needed. Rinse the used one out well, and store dry until washday.

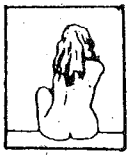




The Keeper is a natural gum rubber cup (similar to that used in baby bottle nipples. The rubber comes from trees tapped for their rubber, rather then being chopped down), that is worn internally, holding (instead of absorbing) monthly flow. The Keeper can hold up to one ounce of menstrual flow. (not sure what the metric equivalent is, sorry.) (An average woman's entire monthly flow is about 2 to 4 ounces.)



The Keeper Menstrual Cup is simple to use. Just empty the cup as needed (usually every 6 to 12 hours), rinse, and reinsert. It comes in two sizes A or B:

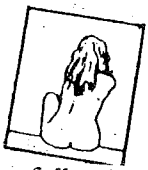


A is for women who have had a baby. a C section
B is for women who haven't had a baby. or had

The Keeper is designed as a cup with a tail. The stem of the cup is hollow to make it more flexible, however, many women find that it is far more comfortable if they simply snip the tail in half. The stem is not like the string of a tampon, it is not made to pull The Keeper out. It is designed only as a guide post to find the bottom of the cup to pinch before pulling it out. Therefore, the stem is not important, women can find the bottom of the cup without it. It seems better for women to tailor its length to their needs, especially if you ride a bicycle. To insert The Keeper, you first fold it in half, and then again lengthwise between your fingers, and insert it fully inside the vagina. While inserting, begin to rotate the Keeper, and once in place continue to rotate at least a full turn to ensure that it has unfolded. Pull gently on it - this helps the Keeper form a seal to ensure no leakage of fluids. Once inserted you will feel how much you need to trim the Keeper's stem. If it is poking into you, it needs more trimming. It's so comfortable - you the cup to release the seal; bear down slightly with your abdominal muscles to help move it downward and remove the Keeper slowly. Your menstrual fluids remains in the cup. Empty the fluid into the toilet, rinse The Keeper well or wipe, and reinsert it. Between cycles, you should rinse The Keeper with warm water and soap or a mild vinegar solution. (There is no need to boil or soak it.)

A good tip:

Instead of flushing your blood down the toilet, you can dilute your cupful in a jugful of water and make a wonderful, natural fertilizer for your plants. You may want to select a special watering can for this magic brew and try it once a month. Sincerely, you will notice your plants get very perky



Extra info on The Keeper can be found at the following website:
http://pacificcoast.net/%7Emanymoons/FAQ.html

Cloth menstrual pads too expensive to buy

- but you couldn't sew one if your life depended on it??

Here's a cheap way to make your own - without sewing at all!

Simply buy the cheapest terry facecloths you can find. Red would be a great colour to buy, but if not choose a colour separate from anything you would normally use as a facecloth.

To use, simply fold in half, then half again - both long-wise. You should have a long narrow pad now. Place in the crotch of your panties, and you are all set - cloth against cloth doesn't move.

For more absorbency, simply fold two cloths together.

For waterproof protection, you can cut 3" by 12" (8 cm by 30 cm) strips of a rubberized flannelette change pad, or Polar fleece, and lay it between your cloth pad and your panties.

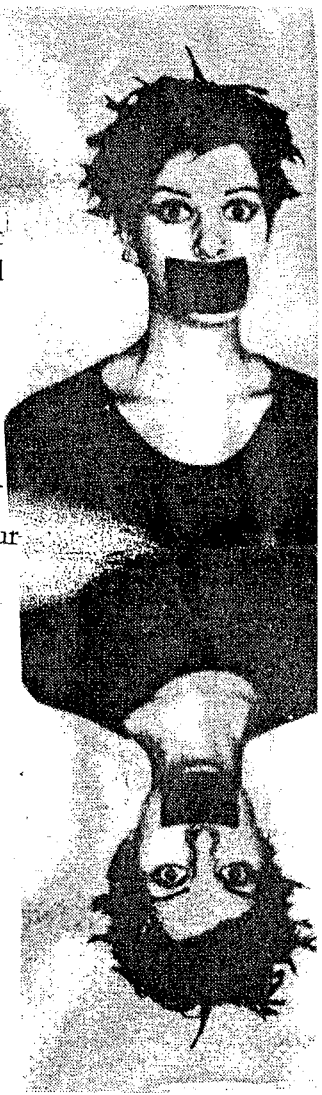
To wash, simply rinse out, and toss in the laundry hamper. Wash together with the regular laundry, no special care needed.

If you do want to sew your own menstrual cloth then please consult the back of zine for pattern, & this:

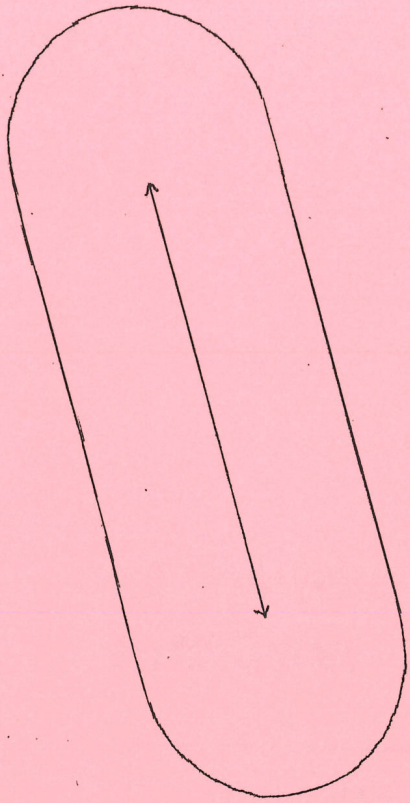
http://www.diapersewing.com/clothpads.htm

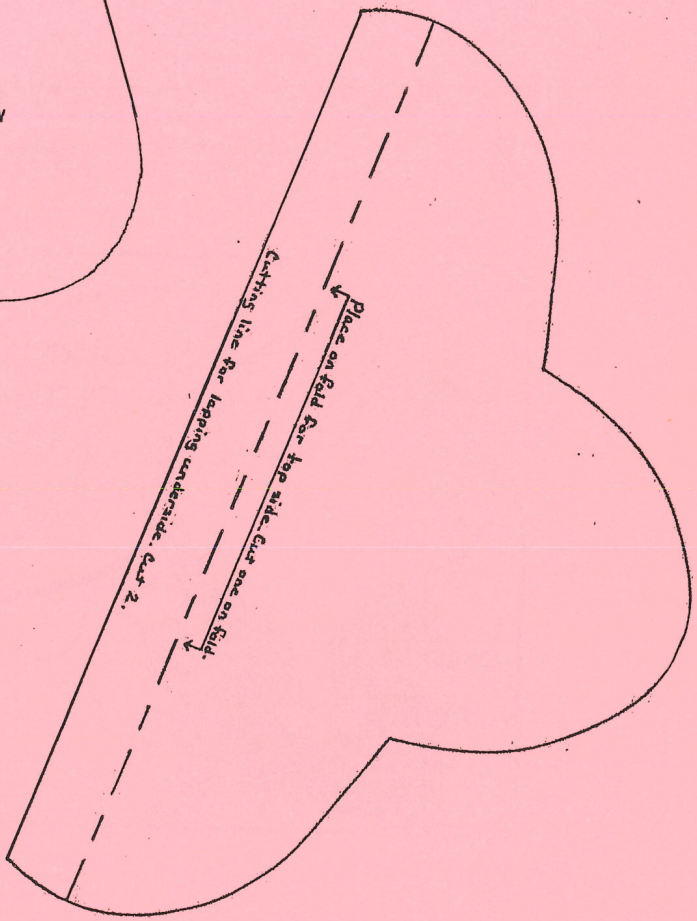
website for instructions (the instructions were too long to include in this zine, sorry!)

p.s. the pad template was reduced to 50% on the photocopy machine. Please upsize ... or enlarge (?!) accordingly when you begin to make your pad.



Be able to eventually wake up every morning & know where the moon with be that night without even looking. When you get your period make a (red!?) mark on your calendar. What did the moon look like on the day you got your period? What did it look like last month? Sooner or later you'll get a rhythm going with the moon. There's no way of knowing what your cycle is until you lunarly track it. Even then, it is likely to traverse the moon's phases throughout the year, but if you keep a good record & watch what goes on between your cunt & the moon, you'll be able to predict, to the day, when you start your period, even if you are "irregular". This is something that takes TIME. You may not have a full grasp of your cycle for six months or so. Getting in tune with your cunt & the moon (heh heh I'm a poet!) will also mean you can figure out when you're in for a hellish period, help you perform early interventions on early symptoms of yeast infections & other nasties, what were once faintly clairvoyant premenstrual dreams take on more lucidity & depth. Sex becomes more intense and ecstatic & you can determine when you will & won't get in the family way – if you investigate the matter fully.





NB: remember
to enlarge pic!!

this zine ~~is~~ part of...

BELLADONNA DIY FEST '04

Great thanks to the Illawarra Women's Health Centre for their support & printing!!

Look at WWW.BELLADONNADIY.ORG and see what's happenin'.